A

DISCOURSE

READ AT THE

ANNUAL ELECTION MEETING

OF THE

CALEDONIAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY,

December 5. 1822,

UPON DELIVERING THE PRIZE MEDAL FOR THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION MADE TO THE SOCIETY DURING THE YEAR 1822, TO MR WALTER HENDERSON, GARDENER AT WOODHALL, LANARKSHIRE, FOR HIS MEMOIR ON THE CULTURE OF ORANGE-TREES IN SCOTLAND.

BY

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DEP. PRES. CAL. HORT. SOC.

FIRST PHYSICIAN TO THE KING FOR SCOTLAND.

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GENTLEMEN,

SINCE the first establishment of this Society, it has been the regular practice, in imitation of the Copleian Medal given by the Royal Society of London, to bestow a Gold Medal, at our Annual Election Meeting, on the author of the most interesting improvement in Horticulture, communicated to us during the course of the year. It is now with much satisfaction I announce to you, that your Council have awarded that Gold Medal for 1822, to Mr WALTER HENDERSON, Gardener to ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, Esq. M. P. at Woodhall in Lanarkshire, for the successful cultivation in Scotland, of the Linnæan genus Citrus, including the best varieties of the Orange-Tree.

Mr HENDERSON has not only been singularly successful in cultivating this delightful exotic

genus; but has afforded the most demonstrative evidence of his skill, by exhibiting to us in this room, trees of that genus in a most healthful state, adorned with the flowers of one year, the green fruit of another, and the golden ripe fruit of a third. Such Orange-Trees none of your Council, who inspected them, have ever before seen in Scotland.

It was my lot, Gentlemen, at an early period of my life, when Surgeon to an East Indian Ship, to see groves of orange-trees, in what was probably their native climate. In the islands at the mouth of Canton River, celebrated for produing the best oranges in China, I had many opportunities of examining this delightful and useful vegetable, in a state of the highest perfection. But even there, the foliage had not a more healthful appearance, the flowers had not a more fragrant odour, nor the fruit a more delicious flavour, than those cultivated by Mr HENDERSON in the West of Scotland.

I am far indeed from thinking, that Mr HENDERSON'S improvemonts in the culture of the Orange-Tree, can be of any great national utility, or even prove a source of emolument to the Scottish Gardener. In one point of view, this improvement is not to be compared with some others, for which our Gold Medals have at different Meetings been awarded. The improved cultivation of the orange-tree, will, in my opinion,

be of much less real benefit to Scotland, than Mr MACDONALD'S improvement in the culture of our Common Onion, or Mr PARKES' introduction of Sea-salt, as a manure in our gardens. By means of both these, every intelligent market gardener may derive a lucrative return, as the fruit of his skill and industry. But in point of price, our market gardener can never dream of bringing Scottish oranges, even by the most successful culture, into the market, in competition with those of Spain, Portugal and other parts of Europe, where the climate is both more steady and more genial; and where the Orange-Tree grows with so little culture, that it is now considered almost as an indigenous plant.

But as an object of curiosity, the Orange-Tree, by improved culture in Scotland, may afford singular satisfaction to every Caledonian Horticulturist. Self evident demonstration has now been afforded in this room, that, by aid of the protection which we can always obtain by means of our glass, and by the assistance of the heat which we can easily command from our coal, we can produce, at almost every season of the year, oranges in Scotland, which, in every respect, may bear a fair comparison with the oranges imported to us from climates, even the most congenial to that delightful tree.

Besides this, the Orange tribe are highly desirable ornaments of our green-houses and conser-

vatories during the winter and spring. They add to the beauty of dressed lawns during the summer, and they may decorate the drawing-rooms and the dinner tables of the opulent, at every season of the year. Thus, to the industrious gardener, improvement in the culture of these may produce no inadequate pecuniary return for his industry and skill. It is, therefore, with singular satisfaction, that I now execute the commands of your Council, by delivering to Mr HENDERSON your Gold Medal, for the most interesting improvement in Horticulture, communicated to our Society during the year 1822. And I now place it in the hands of his friend Mr NEILL, to be transmitted to him.

At our Anniversary Election Meeting, Gentlemen, it has been my practice, as Depute President, to give you some account of the progress and present state of our Society; and to inform you of the future prospects of your Council, with regard to those important objects which they have long had in contemplation, for the improvement of Horticulture in Scotland. I need not remind you, that the most important of these objects are, the establishment of a Professorship of Horticulture in the University of Edinburgh, and of an Experimental Garden in the neighbourhood of the City.

When I addressed you last year on this occasion, I was, indeed, in hopes that we should, ere

now, have been in possession of an Experimental Garden. For although, by the exertions of this Society, experiments have been carried on by our intelligent Corresponding Members in every part of Britain, from Johny Groat's House, in Caithness, to the Land's End, in Cornwall; and although, by means of these experiments, Horticulture has obtained many improvements, yet there cannot be a doubt, that still farther improvements might result from experiments conducted under the eye of this Society; particularly, as these experiments might at present be superintended by three of our intelligent fellow Members, by Professor DUNBAR, whose own garden, in the vicinity of Edinburgh, is one of those sights which claim the admiration of every discerning traveller, who visits what has been called the Modern Athens of Europe; by Dr GRAHAM, the able Professor of Botany in the University, and by Mr NEILL, our very valuable Secretary. But although we have not yet got possession of our projected Experimental Garden, your Council have made a conditional bargain with JAMES ROCHEID, ESQ. of Inverleith, for a piece of ground, measuring about seven acres. That ground lies immediately adjoining to the new Royal Botanic Garden, and is very nearly in the neighbourhood of the Villas of Professor DUNBAR and of Mr NEILL, whose small spot of garden ground, extending to little more than

a quarter of an acre, is an object of admiration to every intelligent visitor.

By this situation we may with ease derive advice from some of our most intelligent members, not only with perfect ease, but with much pleasure and satisfaction to themselves. And of that advice the advantages cannot I think be estimated too highly.

I have now the satisfaction of laying upon your table a lithographic Plan of the ground alluded to, executed at the expence of Mr ROCHEID, in which our intended Experimental Garden, the new Royal Botanical Garden, and extensive Nursery Gardens possessed by our worthy members Messrs DICKSONS Brothers, together with the intended adjacent buildings, are delineated.

Of this ground, in a situation on many accounts so desirable, Mr ROCHEID offers to give us immediate possession, as soon as we are able to pay him the stipulated price. And till we are able to pay the purchase money, your Council think it would be very inexpedient to begin their operations But although our efforts at home for obtaining the necessary funds have been aided by a subscription of more than L. 700, remitted to us from Bengal, and chiefly obtained by the exertions of that excellent botanist Dr WALLICH, Superintendant of the Botanic Garden at Calcutta, yet a very considerable sum is still wanting.

Your Council, however, have it in contemplation to borrow money for that purpose, which they trust may, in no long time, be repaid from additional subscriptions both at home and abroad, and from the increasing annual revenue of the Society. They are not without hopes that, for this important national purpose, a loan may be obtained from Government on easy terms. I therefore entertain confident hopes, that we may soon be able to see the commencement of an Experimental Garden, which I have no doubt will be highly honourable to the City of Edinburgh, and highly beneficial to every part of the British Empire.

The second important object to which I alluded, and which your Council have also long had in view, the establishment of a Professorship of Horticulture in the University of Edinburgh, would, I am perfectly convinced, be productive of no less national benefit than the Experimental Garden. This projected Professorship is by no means intended for the instruction of operative gardeners, but to promote and improve a taste for Horticulture among the Students of Philosophy, of Medicine, of Law, and, in a particular manner, of Divinity. It is not intended that it should qualify Students to prosecute Horticulture as an object of gain, but as affording to the sedentary and studious, especially to country Clergymen, one of the most innocent, the most interesting

and the most healthful of rural amusements. So much am I convinced of the healthfulness of Horticulture, that I have put upon the door of my own little garden at St Leonard's Hill, the words *Hinc Sanitas*. That recommendation of gardening, may be read by every passenger who allows himself to enjoy one of the most romantic public walks which the environs of Edinburgh affords; —the walk between the basaltic columns at the foot of Arthur's Seat, and the Lake at the Village of Duddingston.

But if I have recommended Horticulture to the inhabitants of Edinburgh by precept, I have recommended it still more by example. For in that small garden I may be found almost every good Summer morning, before breakfast, obtaining from it both amusement and health. And when you consider, Gentlemen, that I am still able, in the Seventy-ninth year of my age, now to address you from this chair, with vigour both of mind and body, very little impaired, you may, I think, view me as a living example of the healthfulness of Horticulture. I am far, indeed, from attributing solely to Horticulture the good health and long life with which it has been the will of a kind Providence to bless me. But I am convinced that gardening, has been a powerful auxiliary both to my health and happiness. And I have no doubt that it may prove equally agreeable, and equally useful, to every country Clergyman.

It is by no means necessary, that a Clergyman should cultivate his garden at a great expence. But, with a taste for Horticulture, he may obtain both health and pleasure, from the occasional labour of a domestic servant, conjoined with his own moderate and healthful exertions during leisure hours. In this manner, like my friends DUNBAR and NEILL, whose gardens I have already mentioned, he might not only supply his family with culinary vegetables, but with a variety of the finest fruits. Several of these, indeed, are not to be had without the aid of artificial heat, and the protection of glass to defend them against the changeable weather of our cold northern climate. It is not to be expected that a clergyman, at the utmost a tenant for life, should incur the expence even of a small vinery. But the Heritors of every country parish in Scotland, are by law obliged to furnish to the minister a manse and a glebe. Part of that glebe is almost universally appropriated to a garden, and I am persuaded, there are very few Heritors, of any parish in Scotland, who would hesitate in improving the manse, by the addition of an adjoining small vinery, which, like those of Messrs NEILL and DUNBAR, might be erected for the inconsiderable sum of about One Hundred Pounds. Of this at least, I am convinced, that if they did hesitate, they would rob themselves of a very considerable pecuniary advantage. For the example

of the Clergyman, as a successful horticulturist, could not fail to improve every estate in the parish.

By a proper garden attached to his manse, the Scottish country clergyman would not only be able to supply his family with abundance of the best culinary vegetables, but might regale his friends with some of the finest fruits of the most genial climates. He might, from his own garden, furnish his own table with Figs, and with Grapes, not inferior to the finest Tokay or Constantia grapes, which the best cultivated vineries either of Europe or of Africa could produce. Nay, if he were able to cultivate the Orange as successfully as Mr HENDERSON, he might even introduce that vegetable on his table, gratifying his guests, with very delicate pleasure, in the way of sight, of smell, and of taste.

Of the excellence of the grapes which can be produced in Scotland by the aid of glass and heat skilfully managed, we have often had ocular demonstration in this room. Of this also, I can speak from my own personal observation in other countries. For during the course of a long life, I have had an opportunity of tasting grapes at many different places. Among other places, I was once at the farm of Constantia, near the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, at that season of the year when grapes were there in the highest perfection. And I can with truth assert, that the finest

grapes which I could select there, were by no means superior to the grapes from the Constantia and Frontignac vines, growing in the conservatories of the Dalkeith and Duddingston gardens in the vicinity of Edinburgh. Such grapes, if a proper taste for Horticulture were introduced among the Scottish Clergy, might be obtained from the garden of every minister's manse in Scotland. Thus, a Professorship of Horticulture, would not only prove a source both of health and of pleasure to our clergy, but would materially improve our country.

Without pretending, Gentlemen, to a prophetical spirit, but reasoning merely from the necessary connection between cause and effect, I will with confidence venture to predict, that if a Regius Professorship of Horticulture shall be established in the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, within the short space of fifty years from the commencement of that establishment, will be the most improved country, in point of Horticulture, on the face of this earth.

We have already, in the University of Edinburgh, a Professor of Agriculture, and, with regard to the great national advantages which would arise from our having also a Professor of Horticulture, there can hardly be two opinions among candid and intelligent men. I am, however, far from imagining, that such an establishment will meet with no opposition. I am not ig-

norant, that, even in the Scottish Universities, there are individuals so much wedded to what they think is for their own pecuniary interests, as to oppose introduction of every new branch of education. They seem to imagine that every class-fee which goes into the pocket of another, would have come to them or to some other Professor already established, if it had not been intercepted. Than this there cannot be a more egregious mistake. On the contrary, the more scientific knowledge that is carried from Edinburgh, whether from private or public tuition, whether derived from teachers in the College or out of it, the higher will be the emoluments of every industrious and able teacher, in consequence of a greater influx of future students. I therefore confidently trust, that any narrow-minded opposition to the establishment of a Professorship of Horticulture in the University of Edinburgh, will be totally disregarded; and I would fain hope, that the period is now arrived, when it will no longer be thought unadvisable for the Council of this Society, to take some active steps with the view of obtaining such an establishment.

Thus far, Gentlemen, I have spoken of the two great objects which we have long had in view, an Experimental Garden and a Professorship of Horticulture. Of the third topic which I mentioned, the progress of our Society since our last Annual Election Meeting, I shall say very little.

I am happy to tell you that we continue to flourish; that both the fame and usefulness of our institution are becoming daily more extensive. During the course of this year, many highly respectable names both at home and abroad have been added to our list. Several interesting discoveries and improvements have been communicated to us, which will soon appear in our Memoirs. And our Annual Prizes have led to improvements in the culture of our best fruits in many different particulars.

Of the excellence of Scottish fruit, an incontestible proof was afforded, both from the quality and abundance of that fruit which was exposed to sale in the fruit-shops of Edinburgh, during the King's late visit to Scotland. And, on that occasion, the fruit produced in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh has been honoured with royal approbation. During his Majesty's residence at Dalkeith House, his table was abundantly supplied with excellent fruit from the Duke of Buccleuch's gardens in Dalkeith Park. And, at his Majesty's departure from Hopeton House, where he went on board the Royal Yacht, that vessel was supplied with a sea-store of truly excellent pine-apples from the Earl of Hopetoun's garden; while those of the Duke of Buccleuch, furnished the Yacht with a profusion of delicious grapes, which could not be excelled in any country on the face of the earth. Such, indeed, was our

beloved Sovereign's opinion of the excellence of the fruit which was supplied to his table at Dalkeith, that before his departure, a valuable Gold Watch was given to the gardener, on which was inscribed, '*The gift of his most gracious Ma-*
'*jesty George the Fourth, to James Mac-*
'*donald, gardener, Dalkeith Park.*' This I consider, not only as an indubitable testimony of his Majesty's approbation of the Horticultural Skill of our fellow member MACDONALD, but as a royal testimony of his approbation of Scottish Horticulture. And I confidently trust, that our Society, which was honoured with his Majesty's patronage when Prince Regent, at its commencement, will continue to deserve and obtain Royal favour, protection and patronage, from one of the best of Kings.